**Top Tips – making your volunteer programme accessible for young volunteers**

**A diverse group of volunteers helps your organisation to engage more effectively with your local community. Involving young volunteers not only supports this diversity, but supports them to begin what is potentially a volunteering journey for life.**

Here are some top tips to help young volunteers engage with your work

**Effective engagement with other partners** – develop good links with other providers working with young people such as schools, colleges, universities, youth services and local charities. They could all give you reach to potential volunteers.

**Effective recruitment** – have simple recruitment processes that can be completed as quickly as possible. . Think about where you can advertise to reach young people. For example vinspired.com is a good website to advertise roles for young people.

**Appropriate and attractive roles** – before you start out there are a number of things to take into consideration when creating volunteer roles for young people. Firstly what might motivate a young person to volunteer with you? how much time do they have? what roles would they find appealing? What roles are appropriate?. Young people usually prefer flexible roles and they may only be available after school hours, weekends and school holidays. It is also important to ensure that the roles are safe and that a risk assessment is carried out to decide whether placing a young person in a volunteer role would put them or the people they are supporting/volunteering alongside at risk.

**Effective induction and training** - it is important to have a clear structure to your youth volunteering programme in order to ensure quality and safety. This will involve developing an effective induction and training programme that is accessible for young people.

**On-going support and supervision** – clear and effective systems for supporting young volunteers are key. Support is usually provided by staff, older more experienced volunteers, and could include a peer support or buddy system. It should be pointed out that any staff or volunteer supervising a young person will require a DBS check. They should also have the right level of training and it needs to be ensured there is a process for them and the young people themselves to be adequately supervised.

**Recognition** – it’s important to show your appreciation on a frequent basis. There are a number of existing programmes of rewards and recognition for young people locally and nationally that you can link with. For example [vInspired](https://vinspired.com/), [Point of Light](https://www.pointsoflight.gov.uk/) and local awards.. Think about certificates, include their story in communications, extra training / development you could provide to support their future aspirations and social events.

**Legislation** – organisations should ensure that they have taken appropriate steps to meet their legal obligation to ensure a young person’s safety and promote their wellbeing. Children are classed as a ‘vulnerable’ group. Legally a child is defined as someone who is under 18 years old. Key steps include:

* Having relevant safeguarding policies and procedures in place.
* If you are engaging volunteers under the age of 16, ensure you make this clear with your insurance agency and make sure they are covered.
* It also necessary to obtain parental/guardian informed consent for volunteers under 16.

The Department of Work and pensions also points out that anyone under 14 cannot work for a profit making organisation, even if unpaid. The definition of profit making may be defined by the local Council and so it is best to check with them how your organisation is viewed if you wish to involve volunteers under 14 years of age. You can read more about volunteering and the law on [the government website.](https://www.gov.uk/volunteering/)